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Dear Customers:

We are closely monitoring a family of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that have been detected in some public water supplies in Massachusetts and across the nation. Recently, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) issued a new drinking water standard for the sum of six PFAS compounds (PFAS6). This new standard requires all Massachusetts public water suppliers to test for PFAS. The sum of PFAS6 may not exceed 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L), also equal to 20 parts per trillion (ppt).

The Lynnfield Center Water District has a mission to deliver clean and reliable water, and we are committed to taking proactive steps against potential threats to our water supply. We already test regularly for one hundred regulated contaminants, and if above the standard, take necessary measures to treat the drinking water. We test our water regularly through a certified laboratory. In 2020 alone, we collected 2,500 water samples in the water system that were then tested for compliance with state and federal health standards.

LCWD is currently testing for the presence of the PFAS6 and will make those results available to the public after they are returned by the laboratory and confirmed by follow-up testing and further analyzed.

Relatively recent advances in laboratory testing now enable us to test for PFAS compounds at extremely low levels. Water systems that tested negative for PFAS at parts per billion may now test positive at parts per trillion. If testing shows PFAS6 levels exceed state standards, please be assured that we will take immediate action to work toward compliance with the recently developed regulations and communicate those plans with the public.

PFAS are a family of chemicals used for nonstick, stain-resistant and water-proof coatings, and in numerous consumer products (e.g. food paper packaging such as pizza boxes, popcorn bags, baking papers, etc.; water-proof clothing and fabric such as rain coats, tents, umbrellas, etc.; cosmetics and personal care products such as dental floss, shampoos, makeup, etc.), industrial uses, and firefighting foams. Manufacturing of certain PFAS was discontinued in the U.S. decades ago, but they may still be used in imported products. PFAS are resilient and do not degrade easily. As a result, they are widely found in the environment as products are disposed of and PFAS leaches into the soil and water, finding its way to food and drinking water sources.

PFAS is universal, and in the United States and other industrialized countries, most people have concentrations of these compounds in their blood. The good news is the levels have been dropping as use of certain PFAS have been discontinued. A 2015-2016 federal study found an 82% drop in PFOS and 70% drop in PFOA in the general population, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Scientists are still learning about the health effects of exposures to mixtures of PFAS. MassDEP states consuming water with PFAS6 above the drinking water standard does not mean that adverse effects will occur, and that the degree of risk depends on the level of chemicals and the duration of exposure.

However, MassDEP recommends that consumers in a sensitive subgroup (pregnant or nursing women, infants and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system), are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ppt. These individuals are advised to use alternative sources of water such as bottled water tested for PFAS6 or in-home filtration systems certified to remove PFAS6 by independent testing groups.

As we await further scientific study, MassDEP has acted to set a drinking water standard. As your public water supplier, we strive to always comply with drinking water standards and will conduct the necessary testing to ensure compliance. We understand that you may have questions and concerns. We invite you to read more information on LCWD's water system, drinking water quality and the topic on our website www.LCWD.US or call to discuss this issue with the staff of LCWD. Please, call us at 781.334.3901 or email us at LCWD@LCWD.US with any questions or concerns.

Notice Approved by: Lynnfield Center Water District

P.S - If you wish to learn more about PFAS, visit www.safewatermass.org, a website developed by the Massachusetts Water Works Association to provide information to our consumers and links to reliable sources of additional information.